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Reserve
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1994

For Viewing

Pack Creek, Swan Cove
and Windfall Harbor



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Alaska Region
R10-RG-90
1994



Alaska
Department of
Fish and Game

Seymour Canal Bear Viewing

Swan Coyé, Windfall Harbor and Pack Creek all have extensive tideflats that provide impor-

United States
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Agriculture

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Courtship amongst bears occurs in spring and early summer.

Photos by John Hyde

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MAY 15 1995

CATALOGING PREP.



Map of Seymour Canal

(Swan Cove, Pack Creek,
and Windfall Harbor)

Anchorage



Camp in sites marked



Refer to USGS maps:

Sitka D—1 & D—2





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Pack Creek and Stan Price

Since the construction of a trail and viewing stand in the 1930's Pack Creek has been managed for bear viewing. Bears are accustomed to seeing visitors and most exhibit little fear of people. A homesteader named Stan Price lived at Pack Creek from the 1950's until his death in 1989. Over these many years the bears became used to the continual presence of humans. The crumbling remains of his floathouse, sheds, and gardens are now left for the bears to use, and for visitors to observe from a distance.

Management of Pack Creek

The Pack Creek area is cooperatively managed by the federal and state governments. As part of the Admiralty Island National Monument it is administered by the USDA Forest Service. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game also manages the Stan Price Wildlife Refuge at Pack Creek. Both agencies cooperate to provide protection for bears and assistance to visitors. Hunting brown bear is prohibited and there are several restrictions designed to keep the bears and the people on good terms (see "Pack Creek Rules").

Bear Safety

Whenever in bear country (whether at Pack Creek or anywhere else) you should act responsibly with food and respect the territorial nature of bears.

■ Keep your distance.

Realize that bears use the forest, the beaches, the creeks, and human trails regularly and might be seen anywhere. Bears are curious and some will approach closely. If you feel uncomfortable back away slowly. It is not wise to surprise a bear, so when traveling make plenty of noise to let the bears know you are around. Bears sometimes communicate to other animals and to humans through body posture.



Standing in profile to you, head lowered, and "passively" looking toward the distance may be a bear's way of showing you his size, a polite way of telling you to move out of his space. Aggression is signaled by salivation, teeth chatter, hair raised on the hump back, and ears laid back along the sides of the head.

Standing erect on hind legs is usually not an aggressive posture. When the bear's head and nose are raised with ears forward, the animal may only be trying to identify noises and smells.

■ Keep a clean camp.

No site, even those on small islands, is safe from a bear visit. Set the tent up well away from the cooking area and do not take food near it. Thoroughly burn all food scraps and trash to remove smells and pack out whatever remains. People who use the site after you will appreciate you not burying or leaving anything behind that will attract bears into their camp. Hang food 12 feet above the ground when not in use. Remember, intentionally leaving food unattended and accessible to bears is considered feeding and is a violation of Alaska law. Be sure to drown your campfire. Many sites are destroyed by campfires that people thought "couldn't possibly spread."

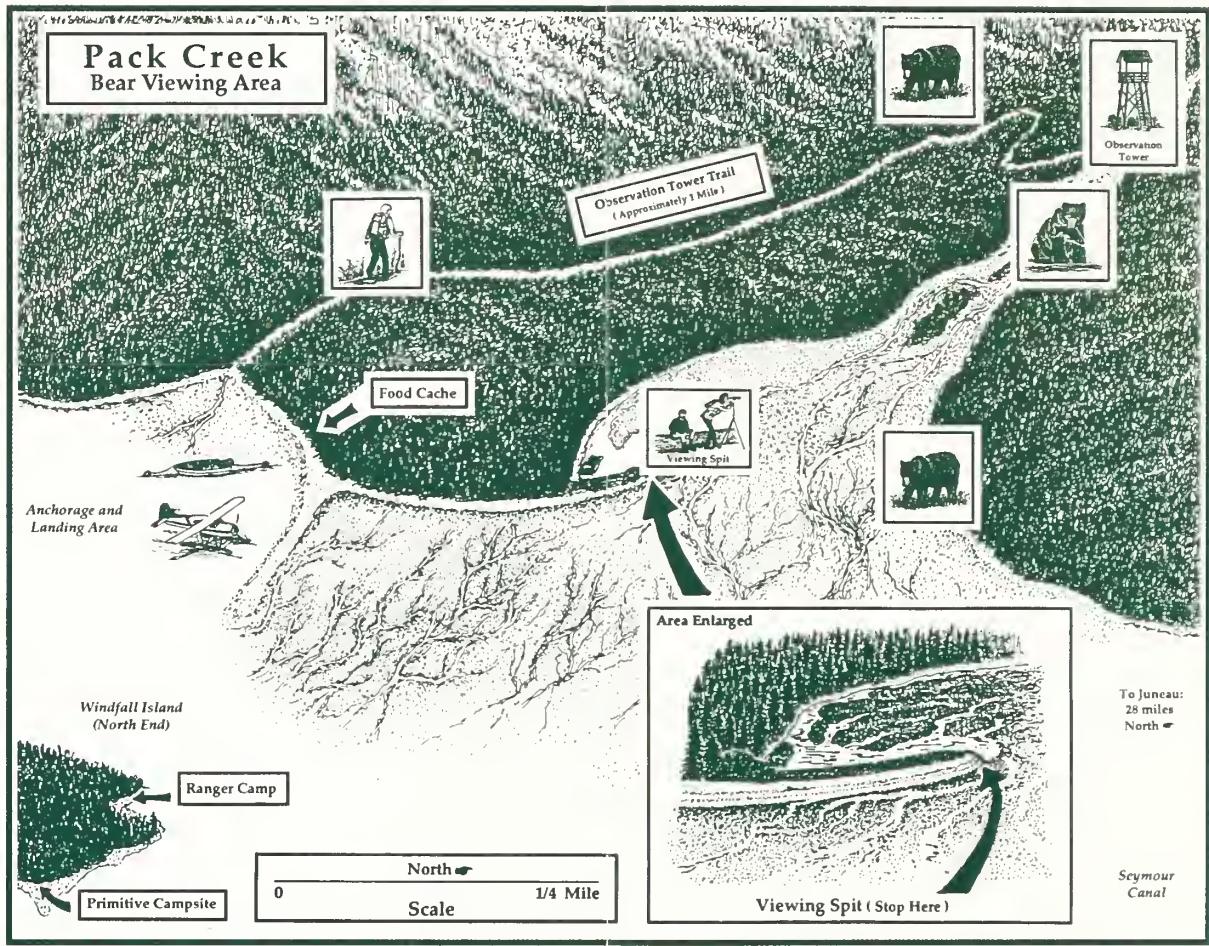


Illustration by Laurie Ferguson-Craig

"Bears here come and go as they please. Their movements are dictated by ancient connections to the tides, the fish and their own inclinations. The longer you stay, the better your odds of seeing them."

John Neary

Pack Creek Rules

Many Pack Creek bears are accustomed to people but they are NOT tame. A few of the bears may approach closely. Follow these simple rules in order to keep your behavior predictable and consistent.

- **Get a permit.** Between June 1 and September 10 permits are required (see "For More Information").
- **Keep your group small.** Although the limit is 12 persons on a permit you'll have much better luck obtaining permits and visiting the bear viewing areas with smaller groups. Only 8 persons are allowed in the observation tower at any one time. During busy times a 3 hour time limit is also in effect at the tower.
- **Watch your time.** Bear viewing is open 9AM to 9PM only. The remainder of the day is for bears only.
- **Watch where you go.** The forest and tide flats are for bears only. Areas you can travel are restricted to the beach high tide trail between the viewing spit and the trailhead, and the forest trail to the viewing tower (see Pack Creek map). This keeps you where the bears expect you to be.
- **Properly store all food items.** A food storage area (cache) is provided (see Pack Creek map). No food, pop, candy etc... are allowed anywhere but at the cache.
- **Keep your pack and gear on your back.** Do not separate yourself from your gear thereby inviting a bear to snatch it (which teaches bears to seek more).
- **Properly anchor your boat.** An outhaul is provided for small boats during peak visitor periods to keep bears out of boats.
- **Camp on Windfall Island.** No camping is allowed near Pack Creek except on the islands nearby. You need a watercraft to access the bear viewing area from camp. Canoe/Kayak rentals are available (see "For More Information").

Pack Creek Advice

There are no facilities in the area other than a trail and a viewing stand. Planes will drop you on a muddy beach, not at a dock. Campsites are little more than a flat area in the woods and there is no water on Windfall Island. Water from streams on the main island nearby should be treated before drinking. This is the Kootnoowoo Wilderness and visitors must encounter it on its own terms.

Come properly equipped. Whether for a day flight or a multi-day camping trip, you should bring raingear, waterproof boots, food, and other essentials. Weather is often rainy and cool; trails can be muddy. Are you sure the plane will be back when you plan for it?

Make your own arrangements. The managers administer permits from the office and are at Pack Creek to protect bears and to provide advice to visitors, but tours are conducted by guides not rangers or biologists. We can send you lists of charter and guide services (see "For More Information").

The best bear viewing times are variable and it's not unusual for several hours to pass without a bear in sight. Stay more than one day for best viewing, or at least come for a full day to maximize your chances.

For More Information:

Forest Service Information Center
101 Egan Drive
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 586-8751

Admiralty National Monument
8461 Old Dairy Road
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 586-8790

